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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is not on the events that occur in the classroom but rather on the meaning of those events. An overview is presented of how affective assessment may be conducted in the elementary school physical education class so that teachers may more effectively observe responses of the pupils to their actions and interpret the meaning of those responses. Methods of gathering information on the characteristics and reactions of children are discussed. The kinds of affective scales that elicit responses that provide information about affective characteristics are delineated. An analysis is offered of the effectiveness of the ethnographic method of observing and reporting. Suggestions and recommendations are made to aid the teacher in becoming more aware of children's inner feelings and ways of responding to classroom demands and situtations. (JD)

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ASSESSMENT OF THE AFFECTIVE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Since my initial interest in affective learning as a public school physical educator in an elementary school and as a doctoral student shaping my inquiry into the semblance of a dissertation, significant advances have been made in the concern for affective assessment in physical education. We have general widespread acceptance on the essentialness of integrating moving, thinking and feeling experiences in response to the holistic nature of growth and development. We seem to be recognizing the uniqueness and individuality of each learner. What once to me, seemed such an incredible, delicate, cautious challenge . . . determining how students feel about what they do . . . is now a less formidable challenge. An article I wrote in 1983 entitled "How do you Measure a Rainbow? Assessment of the Affective" was a naïve attempt to provide supportive rationale for assessing values, attitudes, emotions. Today we are offered varied approaches as we examine the research on teaching that are alternately called ethnographic, qualitative, participant observational, case study phenomenological, and interpretive. Let me extend my overview and clarify some definitions and ideas relevant to assessment of the affective domain.

OVERVIEW OF AFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT

According to Anderson (1981), affective characteristics possess five critical features: a) they are <u>feeling</u>, b) they are <u>typical ways</u> of feeling, c) they have some degree of <u>intensity</u>,

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d) they have direction, and they are directed toward some target (e.g., idea, activity or object). He also offers these major points:

° it is difficult to completely differentiate affective characteristics from other human characteristics.

° assessments are made for some reason or purpose, to gain information about a human characteristic.

° assessment is distinct from evaluation, which refers to the judgment of the worth of value of the characteristic.

° affective characteristics are important both as means to ends (facilitating some desired goal) and as ends in themselves (they are desired goals).

° affective assessment is important because we need to know what characteristics students possess and to what degree they possess them.

° one of the best ways to define an affective characteristic or the target toward which the affective characteristic is directed is to indicate its important aspects or critical features.

INFORMATION GATHERING - METHODS AVAILABLE

Generally speaking there are two ways in which we gather information about human characteristics: We look, and we listen. We use the observational method or the self-report method. Clearly, there are limitations to each. The information gathered is questionable if, when we look, we fail to observe the relevant characteristic or relevant indicator of that characteristic, or if we misinterpret what we observe. When we listen, the person providing the information may be intentionally or accidently reporting in a way that misinforms us as we gather

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the information. There is evidence to suggest that observational and self-report methods purporting to assess the same characteristic do not provide very similar information about that characteristic.

Social desirability is a factor influencing one's response to a self-report instrument. It tends to be a major factor when extremely personal questions are being asked, and when individuals differ widely in their tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner. Self-report methods can be strengthened if they are constructed so that they minimize the social-desirablility factor, contain an approximately even number of favorable and unfavorable items and they are kept relatively short in overall scale length. For general school use, self-report methods appear superior to observational methods for assessing affective characteristics. Practically speaking, their difficulties can be more easily overcome. It also seems that students will express themselves more readily verbally than they will behaviorally. Let's examine the types of affective scales commonly used.

AFFECTIVE SCALES: WHAT KINDS & HOW GOOD ARE THEY?

A scale is a set of related items (statements, adjectives, questions) which elicit responses that provide information about a single affective characteristic. There are four major types of affective scales commonly used: Thurstone scales (most to least continuum), Likert scales (incomplete sentence format), Guttman scales, and Semantic Differential scales. In addition, although not necessarily a scale, there are adjective checklists. Each of these scales is different in their format, their positioning of the statements or adjectives on an underlying continuum, and in whether or not the statements are cumulative. All four scaling

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techniques have strengths and weaknesses. Certain ones are more useful, then, for assessing certain affective characteristics and for accomplishing different purposes than are others.

Five technical qualities are desired in a "good" affective scale:

° communication value: concerned with the extent to which the instrument can be understood by the person responding to it.

° objectivity: concerned with the extent to which the scoring or coding of responses is free from error or bias.

° validity: the extent to which the instument actually provides information about the characteristic it was designed to assess.

° reliability: the consistency of the information obtained from the instrument.

° interpretability: the extent to which the instrument provides information which can be understood by anyone interested.

Scale effectiveness is also enhanced by clearly worded directions, items written appropriate to the reading level possessed by the majority of peqple in the intended group; a precise set of scoring rules; specified qualifications of those doing the scoring; both logical and judgmental validity categories present; reliability estimates used, and assured technical quality.

Surveys, questionaires, narrative self-reports and interviews are specific models of assessment that have been used with satisfaction in looking at affective learning. The possibilities for affective inquiry are endless. Today there is a sharpened focus on evaluation which has resulted in a definite paradigm shift. The shift in one's basic beliefs is less scientific and objectively realistic, toward discovering the standards that natural law intended, with judgments that are in accordance with nature's own requirements. The

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naturalistic paradigm has recently emerged as a serious competitor to the conventional approach. It has many names, as I indicated earlier: ethnographic, case-study, qualitative and others. Of significance in this paradigm is the notion of interaction. There the inquirer, who may not know what there is to be known, interacts and collaborates rather than playing the role of judge. The evaluator enters the scene as a learner, interacts, then gradually gains s clearer picture over time. Such a naturalistic paradigm allows the inquirer, who is likely the teacher, to understand reality rather than predict or control it. According to Guba and Lincoln (1985) this new fourth generation of evaluation may be called the negotiative generation. The process, a sociopolitical one, is change-oriented, diagnostic and educative for all parties involved. Evaluation becomes a collaborative venture between evaluators and respondents. The outcome is an agenda for negotiation, rather than fixed conclusions or recommendations from the data gathered. The result is a shared process leading to recommendations for which all accept equal responsibility. Mutual accountability is tantamount to this approach. If anything goes wrong, it is everyone's and no one's fault. At this time there is no widespread acceptance of the fourth generation evaluation. It is only beginning to be understood at the conceptual level and needs guidance in the practical application. Still, it seems logical that we reexamine our intense reliance on the scientific paradigm and perhaps be less reluctant to move on to inquiry that is truly collaborative.

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If, then, we will consider the ethnographic emphasis we will realize that its most appealing aspect is that people are not mere subjects, they are experts on what the ethnographer wants to find out about. The attention is on the hidden curriculum; the implicit not the explicit. There must be no stereotypes and preconceptions about what is going on. The setting must be studied, explored, observed, as well as the actions of the participants. This requires a broad base of personal knowledge to guide the observation, shape interpretation and further inquiry.

Let's believe that each child has significant cultural knowledge that influences learning. Let's believe that students and teachers are active cultural beings and that they interact in the complete teaching/learning setting. Let's accept the fact that ethnography is holistic, necessitating direct, on-site observation over time...often requiring direct involvement in the participant's activities. Let's acknowledge that ethnographic study does give meaning to lives, to actions and interactions. Now let's ponder everyday classroom interaction, what is taught and how much of it is learned. From your experience, how is teaching and learning conducted? What do you see students doing...and what do they see themselves doing? This includes moving, thinking and feeling, a holistic and interdependent culture. While I urge a holistic perspective I will focus on the selected aspect of the affective domain for ease in generating specific questions. Do we know.....? Do we know:

. How children perceive themselves in physical education?

. How they like their bodies...or what their body image is?

. Their reaction to being timed with a stopwatch?

. When they are sad, shy, nervous, clumsy?

. How children view us, as physical education teachers?

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- When they are confused about what we have asked them to do?
- When they need help or special support.
- Why they get angry, afraid, worried, embarrassed, frustrated?
- Children's perceptions about sharing, cooperating, belonging, decision-making?
- Their movement preferences and reasons why?
- Their attitudes toward sex differences, equality, competition?
- How children feel about certain things they do in our program, e.g.,
    - hanging upside down
    - climbing on high things
    - leaping over obstacles
    - moving backwards
    - stopping suddenly
    - rolling continuously
    - racing with someone else
    - balancing on different body parts
    - striking a ball a long distance
    - dodging objects
    - taking the body off the floor into the air
    - being fitness tested
- What they dream about?
- How they think others perceive them?
- What their perception of "teamwork" or "sportsmanship" is?
- How they feel down deep inside about "picking teams"?
- Whether children perceive themselves as capable leaders, or willing followers?

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. Whether we have earned their respect?

. When they perceive themselves as winners? Losers?

. What they actually know and understand about what they do?

. What self-satisfactions are derived from success?

Do we really know? Do we want to know? What possibilities exist to help us to know? What should we actually want to know? What is it that our students do that is affective but perhaps we've not seen it in that light? May I suggest that the use of video-taping is a valuable and unobtrusive information collection method. It can be done easily and played back for children to elicit an interactive discussion of their thoughts and feelings about their actual experiences. It is useful as playback for teachers alone...teasing out their perceptions of the affective as they assess affective behavior in children. Co-workers and administrators could also do the assessment. The actual videotape recordings have limitless possibilities and can be effectively shared with others who are interested in children and their total development.

Surely we would do well to have an "encounter" with ourselves[How can we examine what actually goes on in our settings and weave it intricately into the total fabric of holistic learning? For example, is there an affective element that is observable as children arrive at the gym? What is their anticipatory set, as individuals within a given class, regarding the hpysical education experience? Do we put any value on this? What is the emotional state of two competitors, juxtapositioned and ready to burst from behind the starting line; of a child seemingly too short to sucessfully shoot baskets at a standard goal; of a child who falls victim to frequent name-calling and harrassment by peers;

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of girls in a co-ed class hoping for equal opportunities to ball handle and share the experience fully; of the child who climbs all the way to the top of the rope for the first time, after countless attempts; of team players maneuvering the ball strategically and successfully toward the goal; of partners sequencing rhythmic patterns to create a dance; of teacher and students creating a learning environment together through mutual decison-making, interaction and feedback?

In an earlier presentation reference was made to Kohlberg's six stages of moral development and the teacher's role and responsibilities in this developmental process. It was clearly stated that this process began with an assessment of the current level of moral functioning of the children. Once the level is identified, approaches to solivng varied moral dilemmas hould be presented. While teachers cannot cause moral development to occur, they can facilitate rather that hinder it. Teachers can do this by modeling the attitude to be developed, providing information concerning the target of the attitude, and by using group techniques in teaching...such as role playing and group decision making. Romance, Weiss & Bockoven (1986) emphasiz-e that a specific program designed to promote moral development through physical education can affect changes in levels of moral growth. Modeling and reinforcement along with interactive teaching strategies aid moral development in physical education.

Weiss and Bredemeier (1985) suggest that moral dilemmas be allowed to surface within a class if moral growth is to occur. Moral dilemmas can readily be built into actual game experiences and group interaction as children practice more complex skills, particularly when shared decision making and negotiation are necessary. Moral growth may also be maximized

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when children know why rules must be followed or certain procedures are necessary. Have you ever asked children how they feel about the rules that govern their play and define their movement behavior?

Regarding self esteem and achievement, Weiss (1986) stated that self esteem emerges from the social interactions and that this must be purposely planned for within the learning experiences, as part of the explicit not hidden agenda. The planning will be contingent upon the teacher's knowledge of the children's level of self esteem. The child must believe that he/she has control over the environment and is responsible for personal success. It is clear that nonw of this will have meaning to the teacher as she/he incorporates moral development and strategies for enhancing self esteem into instruction unless there has been true assessment of "where the children actually are." It is not good enough to take the "it is good, therefore I will do it" outlook; there must be prposeful determination of status and need through assessment.

It is to this end that I suggest an observational model which is structured as micro ethnographic for application by the teacher in the classroom.

OBSERVATIONAL MODEL FOR AFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Let's consider how we might determine ways to find the meaning of movement as it is perceived by children. The model to be suggested has its foundation in ethnographic processes in education as espoused by Frederick Erickson (1985). He classifies information into four types:

Type 1: positive information known by the teacher

Type 2: Negative information known by the teacher

Type 3: Positive information unknown by the teacher

Type 4: Negative information unknown by the teacher

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The task is to document Types 1 and 2 as the base for assessment of the affective and to then look for Types 3 and 4 within the classroom. The known and unknown information will be captured is a narrative and descriptive form.

Preliminary to the actual assessment one would identify two classes (of similar level, e.g. primary, upper elementary, etc.): one class that you,as the teacher feel good about and one that you feel less than good about. This contrast is suggested for the initial application of the moel to provide the teacher the potential for a wide varied range of experience in information collection, interpretation, and application. The sequential steps for the suggested model are:

Step 1: Preliminary Description. For each of the selected classes identify the Type 1 & 2 affective information, the positive and negative behaviors that you know about the classes and about the individual children. Write a narrative description of this known information.

Step 2: Information Collection. Now you are ready to look for Type 3 & 4 information. Discover the unknown. Once discovered it becomes known! In this process you must be keyed into the sights and sounds of the class and the individual children. Nothing is too insignificant to note and remember. Continually ask "what is going on?" Do not ignore what you, the teacher, are doing as the participant/observer. It is suggested that this be accomplished daily for a week and then twice a week for six weeks (6 weeks is an arbitrary period of time; you will know when you have captured all the information that you can get.). The narrative descriptions should be written after, not during, the class...and written as reflective information descriptions.

The narrative description includes three phases:

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. description of the affective behaviors observed

. you, the observer, asking questions about what was observed and what are the meanings?

. project, and give personal meaning to the events; from the child's perspective and from the teacher's.

Some guidelines for the observation process include:

. climate information: what is the learner busy doing? What are the time and space elements? What are the restrictions?

. process information: what seems to be the level of understanding of the task? Is there meaning to what is being done? What are the interactions taking place? With peers and with the teacher what hidden agendas can be discerned?

At all times the teacher participant/observer is carefully noting not just the obvious and visible but that which would be invisible without conscious, aware, purposeful observation.In this context, one will discover simultaneous events...the visible and the invisible which together have distinct and unique meaning within the affective environment of the class.

The class climate and the affective behaviors are not the result of only those events within the confines of the gymnasium. There are external influences which impact heavily upon each class and each child. The teacher participant/ observer must incorporate as much information as possible about the external influences into the narrative descriptions, and look for consistency in these influences. Are there regular patterns of positive and/or negative influences? Discover what the children are bringing with them to your class!

Step 3: Summary. When in your judgment there is sufficient information available, carefully summarize. Identify the affective characteristic observed. Identify patterns of actions, behaviors. Look for consistent trends.

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Then frame questions about the meanings of what you saw that you can ask the children about. Clarify with them the actions and behaviors you observed. Add this new infomation to the arrative description.

Step 4: Application. The initial information collection and summary of affective characteristics becomes the input for instructional planning. You, the teacher, adapt this new information to the affective element of your teaching, integrating the affective into the total program. Because you have done a systematic assessment of the affective does not lead to labeling the little square boxes of your lesson plan book "affective experiences"; rather it should lead to a heightened awareness of the holistic nature of children's learning.

Step 5: Revisit. After a period of time, i.e., six months, repeat the process with additional goals. Ask these important questions: Have changes occurred? Have previous unknowns clearly shifted to known, clearly visible affective behaviors? Have previous known negative characteristics shifted to the positive? Have changes and shifts facilitated the identification of new information?

The application of ethnography in the elementary school physical education environment will ultimately lead to greater understanding of the whole teaching/learning process. In this brief presentation it was intended that you have expanded your awareness and that you will think seriously about the potential of affective assessment utilizing ethnographic procedures.

In the application of ethnographic procedures we are getting descriptive information about individuals, not just children as a group. There is more to assessment in physical education than a 90% success rate on the performance of a particular skill. There's interaction of both a positive and negative nature and individual responses to multiple situations. We are looking at behaviors

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from the "culture of the classroom"...the feelings, values, and beliefs that influence the bahaviors. We are assessing in the real world not in an artifical, contrived environment; we will be observing in an authentic setting, not in an artifical world. We will make affective judgments through the mutual sharing and involvement of the teacher and the student.

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SUMMARY

Clearly, what matters is not so much the events occurring in our classrooms but rather the meaning of those events. Teachers act, observe responses to their actions, and interpret the meaning of those responses. The beliefs and values which guide our behavior are the results of the sense we make out of what we see and learn. We must always look, continuously ask questions, and gain new knowledge from emerging meanings. We must be aware of connections and meanings that are obscure to others, and coherently describe the processes and attempt to make a fresh contribution to the understanding of teaching/learning and how students can fulfill their potential.

If you care, you will know that students feel certain ways; you will know how they feel. You will think about what you are doing and redefine your role. You will examine what it is that you already do, realizing that observation of affective behavior goes with observation of skill performance. You will interact with students and become aware of the value that they place in personal success. You will learn a lot from how students react. Most of all, if you care, you will become comfortable in dealing with affective assessment.

Thank you.

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